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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/842,896	04/27/2001	Masaharu Hayashi	0425-0836P	7584

2292 7590 02/14/2003

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EXAMINER

PRYOR, ALTON NATHANIEL

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1616

DATE MAILED: 02/14/2003

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/842,896

Applicant(s)

Hayashi et al

Examiner

Alton Pryor

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Nov 26, 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 4, 6-8, and 10-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 6, 7, 12, and 14 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 4, 8, 10, 16, and 18 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 11, 13, 15, and 17 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). 13, 18 6) ☐ Other:

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Applicant's request for reconsideration of the finality of the rejection of the last Office action is persuasive and, therefore, the finality of that action is withdrawn. The prosecution of application no. 09/842,896 has been re-opened. Examiner will resume search with Applicants' election of invention comprising stearic acid cited in paper no. 8.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 4 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by BE 892401; 7/1/82 or JP 50129361. BE '401 or JP '361 teaches a method of applying a composition comprising stearic acid to plants. See abstracts. Although the references do not specifically state that their compositions in the method promote plant activation (improving fertilizer absorption or plant yield), it is inherent that plant activation would occur since the prior art teaches the application of stearic acid to the plants as the instant claims.

3. Claim 10,16,18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by JP '361 above. JP '361 teaches a composition comprising stearic acid and a fertilizer. See abstract. JP '361 teaches that the composition has a mixture of fertilizers comprising 81 parts ammonium sulfate, 23 parts potassium dihydrogen phosphate, 13 parts dipotassium hydrogen phosphate and

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168 parts yeast (other nutrient). See abstract. The total fertilizer equals 117 parts which falls within the instant range of 10 to 5,000 parts fertilizer. The total other nutrient (yeast) is 168 parts which falls within the instant range of 10 to 5,000 parts. It is important to note that in a claim to a composition, a statement to the intended use of the composition has no patentable significance.

Claim Objection / Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 11,13,15,17 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 6,7,12,14 are allowable. The prior art does not teach or suggest the instant invention comprising a chelating agent.

Election Requirement

Applicants' elected invention (see paper no. 8) comprising stearic acid is not allowable. See art rejections above.

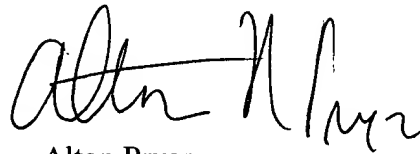
Telephonic Inquiry

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alton Pryor whose telephone number is (703) 308-4691. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jose Dees, can be reached on (703) 308-4628. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 308-4556.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1235.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alton Pryor', is written over a horizontal line.

Alton Pryor

ALTON N. PRYOR
PRIMARY EXAMINER
Primary Examiner, AU

2/12/03